REMARKS

In the final Office Action mailed February 14, 2002, claims 1, 7-9 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Beizer (U.S. Patent No. 6,240,414), and claims 2-6 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Beizer and further in view of Domen (U.S. Patent No. 5,504,676).

In the final Office Action mailed February 14, 2002, the Examiner noted that claims 1-9 were pending and rejected claims 1-9. Claims 1, 2, 7, and 9 have been amended, and thus, claims 1-9 remain pending for reconsideration, which is requested.

The foregoing rejections are respectfully traversed. No new matter has been added in this Amendment.

35 USC 103(a) REJECTIONS

PRIOR ART

Beizer

Beizer discloses a system for resolving data conflicts in a shared data environment without requiring an object accessed by one user to be locked relative to later users. Col. 2, lines 43-57. Further, Beizer discloses a system to analyze changes made by several users to a data object and dynamically detect, mediate, and resolve potential data conflicts. Col. 2, lines 58-61. In particular, Beizer provides on networked servers replicated or mirrored WorkFolder data that can be accessed by local users using reconciliation with or without user intervention. Col. 3, lines 28-29.

Although Beizer discloses conflict checking between some type of document attribute information and master information in col. 8, line 45 to col. 9, line 53, as the Examiner suggests on page 6 of the Action, Beizer does not disclose conflict checking of attribute information relating to organization and department information. For example, Beizer accommodates conflicting changes to the content of a document (i.e., document, image, script, etc.) attached to a WorkFolder (col. 9, lines 25-30). Further, Beizer accommodates conflicting changes to placement or organization of a WorkFolder (col. 9, lines 4-16). However, in contrast to Beizer, the claimed present invention manages "conflicts" between "job attribute information of the documents to manage targets to which the documents are distributed" (claim 8). Therefore, in the present invention, the "attribute

information" is "used to manage the distribution targets of each document" (claim 2).

Domen

Domen relates to processing jobs of an office using forms of a predetermined input format. In particular, Domen accommodates job processing when a form's format is updated by separating a form's format information from processing of data input in the form (col. 3, line 57 to col. 4, line 17 and col. 15, lines 3-6). Domen's example office forms include department code and department name information.

Combination of Beizer and Domen

Although Beizer does not disclose conflict checking of attribute information relating to organization and department information, the Examiner combines Domen with Beizer to support the following combined system: "Domen provides the data of a document including the department name and the department code for distribution an item where attribute information of the item is stored the database, and Beizer provides updating a document if a conflict of the master attribute information with the local attribute information is detected." Page 6, lines 12-15 of the Action.

However, as discussed above, Beizer does not disclose or suggest the present invention's distinguishing feature of managing "conflicts" between "job attribute information of the documents to manage targets to which the documents are distributed" (claim 8). Therefore, a combined Beizer and Domen system would not provide "job attribute information of the documents to manage targets to which the documents are distributed" and resolve conflicts between such job attribute information and master attribute information (claim 8).

DISTINCTIONS OF THE CLAIMED PRESENT INVENTION OVER THE PRIOR ART

The Examiner does not expressly provide a rationale for rejecting claim 8, which recites the patentably distinguishing feature, "job attribute information to manage targets to which the documents are distributed" (claim 8). In the present invention "attribute information" of documents relate to distribution target characteristics, such as project name to which a document belongs, company/organization/person in charge of a document, etc. In particular, each document (e.g., drawing, form) has "attribute information" in a distribution-target management table (Fig. 2). Page 9, lines 18-20. Distribution targets can be, for example, organizations, departments, projects, and/or personnel.

Independent claims 1, 7 and 9 are amended to further emphasize the distinguishing features of the claimed present invention, consistent with claim 8. The present invention (as

recited in amended independent claims 1, 7 and 9, and claim 8, using the recitation of claim 9 as an example) comprises:

> servers connected to a network and storing master attribute information relating to distribution targets of each document for jobs to be performed; and
>
> a processor in communication with the servers via the network and storing in a storage unit electronic documents used/produced when performing the jobs and storing attribute information of the documents to manage targets to which the documents are distributed, retrieving the master attribute information of the documents from the servers, and updating the attribute information of each document responsive to a conflict between the attribute information of each document and the master attribute information (emphasis added).

CONCLUSION

Dependent claims 2-6 (depending, either directly or indirectly, from claim 1) are at least patentably distinguishing due to their dependencies from independent claim 1. In view of the amendments and remarks presented above, withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-9 and allowance of claims 1-9 is respectfully requested.

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the claims by the current amendment. The attached page is captioned "**Version with markings to show changes made.**"

If there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

Respectfully submitted,
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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE CLAIMS

Claims 1, 2, 7 and 9 are **AMENDED** as follows.

Recitation of all pending claims is provided for reference convenience.

1. (FOUR TIMES AMENDED) A document management apparatus managing electronic documents used/produced when performing jobs by being connected to an information management device maintaining master attribute information for a plurality types of attribute information included in said documents through a communication network, the attribute information relating to distribution targets of each document for the jobs, said apparatus comprising:

a document storage section storing said documents;

a communication section acquiring information from a device connected to said communication network;

a determination section determining, for each document stored in said document storage section by reading out the master attribute information maintained by said information management device through said communication section, whether the attribute information included in the document conflicts with the master attribute information; and

a rewriting section rewriting any of the attribute information included in the document when said determination section determines that the attribute information conflicts with the master attribute information.

2. (FOUR TIMES AMENDED) A document apparatus according to claim 1, wherein each document comprises corporate organization codes as well as corporate organization names as the attribute information used to manage the distribution targets of each document;

said determination section determines that attribute information included in a document conflicts with the master attribute information in a case where the corporate organization codes included in said document are stored in the master attribute information but a combination of the corporate organization codes with the corporate organization names is not stored therein, and also in a case where the corporate organization names included in said document are stored in the master attribute information but a combination of the corporate organization codes with the corporate organization names is not stored therein; and

said rewriting section rewrites corporate organization names in said document when it is

determined by said determination section that the attribute information include in said document conflicts with the master attribute information because the corporate organization codes included in said document are stored in the master attribute information but a combination of the corporate organization codes with the corporate organization names is not stored therein, and rewrites corporate organization codes in said document when it is determined by the determination section that the attribute information included in said document conflicts with the master attribute information because the corporate organization names included in said document are stored in the master information but a combination of the corporate organization codes with the corporate organization names is not stored therein.

3. (THREE TIMES AMENDED) A document management apparatus according to claim 2, wherein each document is correlated to job information;

a second information management device maintaining second master attribute information$_1$ in which a corporate organization code or a corporate organization name can be retrieved using job information$_1$ is connected to the communication network; said document managing apparatus further comprising:

a retrieving section retrieving, for each document stored in the document storage section, a corporate organization code or a corporate organization name correlated to job information of the document from the second master attribute information maintained by said second information management device through said communication section; and

a second rewriting section rewriting contents of said document, when a combination of the corporate organization code with the corporate organization name retrieved by said retrieving section does not coincide with the combination of the corporate organization code with the corporate organization name included in said document.

4. (as ONCE AMENDED) A document management apparatus according to claim 1 further comprising an electronic mail outputting section outputting, when a document is rewritten, an electronic mail to notify changing of an attribute information in the document to each department identified by the attribute information included in with rewritten document.

5. (as ONCE AMENDED) A document management apparatus according to claim 2 further comprising an electronic mail outputting section outputting, when a document is rewritten, an electronic mail to notify changing of attribute information in the document to each department identified by the attribute information included in the rewritten document.

6. (as ONCE AMENDED) A document management apparatus according to claim 3 further comprising an electronic mail outputting section outputting, when a document is rewritten, an electronic mail to notify changing of attribute information in the document to each department identified by the attribute information included in the rewritten document.

7. (FOUR TIMES AMENDED) A computer-readable recording medium with a computer program recorded therein causing a computer having a communication section function as a document management apparatus managing electronic documents used/produced when performing jobs by being connected to an information management device maintaining master attribute information for a plurality types of attribute information included in said documents through a communication network, the attribute information relating to distribution targets of each document for the jobs, said apparatus comprising:

a document storage section storing said documents;

a determination section determining for each document stored in said document storage section by reading out the master attribute information maintained by said information management device through said communication section whether the attribute information included in the document conflicts with the master attribute information; and

a rewriting section rewriting any of the attribute information included in the document when said determination section determines that the attribute information conflicts with the master attribute information.

8. (as ONCE AMENDED) A computer system in communication with an information management system and managing document distribution, comprising:

a processor storing in a storage unit documents and job attribute information of the documents to manage targets to which the documents are distributed, retrieving master job attribute information of the documents from the information management system, determining whether the job attribute information of each document conflicts with the master job attribute information, and updating the job attribute information of each document when determined that the job attribute information of each document conflicts with the master job attribute information.

9. (TWICE AMENDED) A system to manage electronic documents used/produced when performing jobs, comprising:

servers connected to a network and storing master attribute information relating to

distribution targets of each document for [of] jobs to be performed; and

a processor in communication with the servers via the network and storing in a storage unit electronic documents used/produced when performing the jobs and storing[job] attribute information of the documents to manage targets to which the documents are distributed, retrieving the master attribute information of the documents from the servers, and updating the [job] attribute information of each document responsive to a conflict between the [job] attribute information of each document and the master attribute information.